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# The Collector and Art Critic

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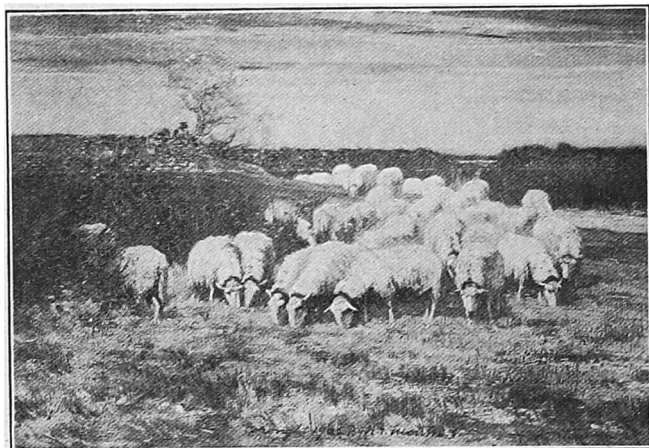
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## HORATIO WALKER.

The comparison of one artist with another often produces a negative effect, because the unthinking one will set down the later artist as the imitator of the earlier one. But if we should call Constable the English Ruysdael, would that detract from Constable's originality? If we call Jacob Maris a Dutch "impressionist," would that make him an imitator of the great Frenchmen who followed the school of lightbaths? A pot will be round and a fish scaly and wet, whether painted by Chase, Carlson or Hawthorne, yet each of these men have stern individuality, although their eyes often may see things in the same light. This thought is exemplified in the water colors by William Ritschel, who sees the ocean or countryside like Mesdag and Mauve did, yet gives these scenes in his own way. So two artists may have the same sympathetic cord touched by nature's peculiarities, find the same *rapprochment* when in contact with humanity, feel attracted to the same idiosyncracies of creation and portray all this with the same truthfulness of expression, and yet be themselves.

With this in mind I may call Horatio Walker the Millet of the American school, and the day will come when a place of equal worth will be accorded to the American artist, because, with a similarity of artistic insight, he has his own expression, as strong, as self-reliant, as individual as that of the great Frenchman.

Little is to be told of Walker's life, for unlike many artists, he hates to talk about himself. He was born at Listoel, in Canada, in 1858, and began painting in Toronto when but fifteen years of age, nor did a master direct his early efforts. Within a few years he settled in New York, spending his



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## HORATIO WALKER SHEEP AT PASTURE

summers, however, in Canada. Of late he has made his summer home on the Isle d'Orleans, in the St. Lawrence River. There he finds those distinctly rural and pastoral scenes of delightful sentiment which have come to us at all too rare occasions, and which are filled with the elements characteristic of French Canadian life of the habitant.

Horatio Walker handles his brush broadly, but his pictures rarely show the work they cost him; despite their breadth and simplicity in manner he often spends a year or more on one of them, changing it so radically that when he finishes it there is little resemblance to the original sketch. So he is not a rapid worker, for he is punctiliously scrupulous as to the quality of a picture he sends out, and never a superfluous one leaves his easel. His color is always rich, pure and true, whether inclining to the sombre and deeper notes, or in brighter keys, when it is joyous and vibrating, full of the intimate charm of sunshine, bright skies and the atmosphere which breathes and palpitates. Only he who is a poet at heart can feel and transcribe it.

His drawing is powerful, his cattle as strong as Troyon's, yet he can be very tender, as his sheep pictures show, one of which is reproduced above.

The last picture which Horatio Walker has completed is now on exhibition at the Montross Gallery. It is painted with a harmony of color, a brightness of key, a sympathy with nature and humanity which vitalizes the scene, so that one who has a spark of love for art cannot fail to admire. There is here evidence of an energetic hand, largeness of style, vigor of composition. The figures of the sawyers are alive. You might have posed them, clicked the camera, and have the counterfeit of the stark stiffness of arrested motion. Here there is action, straining of the muscles, nervous tension, feverish grasp of labor to be done. Then bathe the whole in a clear autumn atmosphere. Light is supreme; it diffuses itself over the scene; it unites in exquisite gradation all parts, and touches them in relief. It is light, pervading all, luminous and brilliant. No one could have painted better, and few so well.